Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and sixty-fourth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 18 August 2015, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Henk Cor van der Kwast ..... (Netherlands)

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The President: I call to order the 1364th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. First of all, I would like to welcome a new colleague — the French Ambassador — to the Conference on Disarmament.

(*spoke in French*)

Dear colleagues, allow me at the outset to welcome Ms. Alice Guitton, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament. I look forward to the fruitful discussions that we will have in this Conference, and I hope that we will be able to make progress on the issue of disarmament.

(*spoke in English*)

At today's meeting, as in previous years around this time, the delegation of Japan has informed us that it includes a representative of the group of high-school students who are Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons. I would like to give the floor, therefore, to the representative of Japan. Ambassador Sano, you have the floor.

Mr. Sano (Japan): This morning, I would like to introduce Ms. Tsugumi Inoue, who is a high-school student from Hiroshima and will shortly take the floor as a member of my delegation. She is visiting Geneva together with other Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons, commissioned by Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida.

They are now observing the Conference on Disarmament from the balcony of this chamber. Their main mission is to relay the harsh experiences of hibakusha across national borders and generations. They have volunteered from different regions of Japan and are running a campaign to collect signatures — as Hiroshima Nagasaki Peace Messengers — for the sake of a world free of nuclear weapons. These signatures are submitted to the United Nations in Geneva every year.

Before I give the floor over to Ms. Inoue, I would like to announce that an event commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki will be held at 4.30 p.m. this afternoon in room XIV, the Kazakh Room. At this event, Youth Communicators will make a presentation about their activities.

Allow me now to give the floor over to Ms. Inoue.

Ms. Inoue (Japan): It is a great honour for me to be able to speak at the Conference on Disarmament. Twenty-two high-school students, including myself, have been appointed as Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons by the Japanese Government. Today, I would like to inform you of the horror caused by the atomic bombings over Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to renew our call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

I was born and brought up in Hiroshima. I have therefore met many people who have a genuine desire for a peaceful world. Among them is an atomic bomb survivor who is in a wheelchair. He said to me: "I wish I could visit the United Nations right now and make an urgent appeal to eliminate these weapons."

At 8.15 a.m. on 6 August 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima — the first wartime use in human history. My great-grandfather walked into the devastated area to look for his relatives and got caught in the shower of radioactive fallout. His body was riddled with radiation released in the explosion. He suffered from lung cancer for 40 years and eventually died of heart disease. Not once did he ever speak about that day. Had he talked about it, not only would he have been reminded of that harrowing day but he also could have been discriminated against.

Two atomic bombings completely destroyed the entire cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Between August and the end of 1945, approximately 140,000 people in

Hiroshima and 70,000 people in Nagasaki lost their precious lives. Furthermore, all the survivors suffered harm: some were burned and poisoned and others were injured. Radiation continues to impair all the survivors' bodies even after 70 years have passed. The physical and psychological pain has never been healed. A famous Japanese poet described the situation: "When an atomic bomb falls, day turns into night and people turn into ghosts." But I would like to remind you that each one of the victims have their own future.

I have a strong sense of responsibility, since I have an atomic bomb survivor as part of my family.

The strongest wish of the survivors is to have "no more war in the future". Therefore, it is my mission to convey their message to people around the world.

The first Peace Messengers were dispatched to the United Nations 18 years ago to deliver the voices of the survivors to the world. This is when the "10,000 High-School Students' Signatures Campaign" started, which aspires to the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of a peaceful world. It spread not only throughout Japan but also to many other countries. Currently, the total number of signatures has reached 1,337,598. A baton for peace was handed down to us.

This year marks the seventieth year since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We must take one big step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Our motto is: "Our efforts are small, but not in vain". I hope that the world will respond to our call.

Finally, I would like to encourage all of the delegates in the Conference on Disarmament to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The President: I thank Ms. Inoue and the Ambassador of Japan for their statements. I now have on my list Ambassador Fu Cong of China. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Fu Cong (China): Thank you, Mr. President. I will wait until the students put on their earphones because I am going to speak in Chinese.

(*spoke in Chinese*)

First of all, I would like to welcome to the Conference on Disarmament the high-school student representatives from Nagasaki, Japan. Your arrival at the Conference every year at this time always reminds us of that dark period of history last century. We appreciate your strong sense of responsibility to bring about peace.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the seventieth anniversary of the victory in the world war against fascism. A great Western philosopher once said: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." In China, we too have an old saying, which goes: "What is past, if not forgotten, is a lesson for what is to come." Being mindful of history serves to shape the future, and not forgetting the war serves to preserve peace.

History should be viewed as an organic whole rather than as isolated fragments. Only with a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of history and a profound reflection on the root causes of that war can we learn the appropriate lessons from history and avoid the recurrence of such human tragedies.

Seventy years ago, the two atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima caused insurmountable suffering to the innocent civilians there. The war that ended 70 years ago also brought unfathomable disaster to the people of many countries in the world. A full 70 years later, the innocent civilians who suffered the scourge of the war are still haunted by the trauma of such tragedies. This includes you, your parents' generation and your grandparents' generation. It also includes the survivors of the Nanjing Massacre and

the Auschwitz concentration camp and their descendants, as well as the utterly humiliated "comfort women" and their families.

Let us engrave in our minds the sorrowful cries of all the people who suffered from that war, unite together to oppose all wars and preserve peace, earnestly guard against the resurgence of militarism and strive to create a better and more peaceful world.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and now give the floor to France.

(*spoke in French*)

Madam Guitton, you have the floor.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished colleagues, I would like to thank you for your warm words of welcome. It is indeed a great honour for me to address you for the first time in this prestigious Council Chamber. As I am taking the floor having just recently submitted my credentials, my intention is, above all, to listen to you carefully, to take note of your experience and to fully understand how you perceive the issues that lie at the core of the responsibilities of the Conference on Disarmament. As Emmanuel Levinas, a philosopher I admire a great deal, once said: Before the Other, the I is infinitely responsible. I want to stress the concept of responsibility because I believe that the objectives of disarmament must be closely linked to the objectives of stability, peace and international security.

The strategic environment in which we operate today is characterized by a worrying level of complexity and unpredictability. We can only make solid and determined progress towards an ambitious, realistic and effective disarmament agenda if that objective is rooted in a guarantee that the proposed measures will not weaken security for all but, rather, will contribute effectively to the creation of a safer world for future generations. In this regard, I wish to welcome the presence of a group of young messengers of peace from Hiroshima and Nagasaki during this solemn period of commemoration.

Truly, reciprocity, transparency and political will must inspire our efforts. It is in that spirit that I would like to assure you of the sincere commitment of France to work actively and tirelessly to achieve concrete progress in this forum, in full cooperation with all of the Governments involved from the international community, without forgetting the important contribution that civil society can make to our discussions.

I am aware that the task will be both arduous and complex in the light of the regrettable failure a few months ago of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. While it is true that there is understandable frustration at the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament that has gone on for too long, we must not lose confidence in this forum.

The Conference on Disarmament is and should remain the single multilateral forum for negotiating global disarmament treaties. After all, it was in the Conference on Disarmament or its predecessor bodies that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty were negotiated. In addition to the legitimacy conferred upon it by the General Assembly in 1978, the Conference on Disarmament has three characteristics which, in my view, make it irreplaceable.

Expertise, the representation of all States with key capacities and the consensus rule are the three elements that ensure the participation of all States and respect for their legitimate security interests. They also ensure that the agreements we negotiate together will be enforced by all those who have adopted them. Lastly, they are the best possible

asset for achieving the universality of treaties. Ultimately, they are one of the valuable conditions of effective multilateralism that we are aiming for.

Although we began the last week of your presidency yesterday, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the vigour with which, I understand, you have conducted the work of this assembly. I, of course, express my gratitude as well to the Presidents who have preceded you and, more generally, the six Presidents for the current session. The discussions have showed promise and we need to build on this momentum.

To achieve disarmament, as I said, we must work together progressively and pragmatically by building on existing progress. That is how France views disarmament. It is a concrete process based on realistic and gradual measures, and I hope that the French record can be assessed in the light of these criteria. I think that everyone can recognize that France has been exemplary in this area.

Before you today, Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished colleagues, I would like to reiterate my personal commitment to make every effort to consolidate the normative framework for disarmament that has been built to date and add to it the indispensable steps that need to be considered for the future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam, and I see that you are aware that the task will be arduous and complex. It is with pleasure that we will work on it with you.

(*spoke in English*)

I now give the floor to the delegation of Latvia.

Ms. Kazina (Latvia): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of that office and assure you of the support of my delegation and all observer States to the Conference on Disarmament. Today, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, which consists of 38 States.

I would like to take this opportunity to submit to the Conference a working paper on enlargement prepared by the informal group of observer States. In this paper, we have noted down some of the most important questions that we have been raising throughout the years on enlargement of the Conference. We believe that the 15 years that have passed since the last enlargement is too long a time to have passed without any substantial discussion on this question. We therefore call on the member States of the Conference to undertake such a discussion in 2016. We believe that such a discussion will help us to find answers to questions, some of which are already included in the working paper.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament must evolve to ensure that universality, transparency and multilateralism are the values that truly define work on disarmament and arms control issues at the United Nations. The group welcomes a frank discussion on the questions raised in the working paper.

The President: Just for clarification, has the working paper been circulated? Could the Secretary enlighten us on that please? You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Kalbusch (Secretary of the Conference): We received the working paper yesterday, and it will be circulated as a Conference on Disarmament document in the coming days as soon as it is translated in all the official languages.

The President: Are there any further requests for the floor? I recognize Slovenia. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Žerovec (Slovenia): Slovenia strongly supports the statement just delivered by the coordinator of the informal group of observer States. In the case of the observer States

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to the Conference on Disarmament, which is at the beginning of substantive discussions on enlargement of the Conference, we urge the Conference to adopt the programme of work and start the work for which it has an exclusive mandate: to negotiate multilateral disarmament agreements.

The President: I now have the colleague of Portugal on my list. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): I would simply like to add my voice to Latvia and Slovenia in introducing this working paper, which I hope will benefit from the attention and from the comments of all member States. I would also like to warmly welcome the Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament, inasmuch as it is my duty to do so, and to echo her statement on the issues of mutual responsibility, reciprocity and transparency in our workings on disarmament and arms control. I think these are key messages to pass on, which should truly preside over our dealings on these matters.

The President: The next speaker is the delegate of Greece. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Tsaousis (Greece): Mr. President, I just want to express our support for the statements delivered by the previous speakers.

The President: Are there any further requests for the floor? I recognize Turkey. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Mr. President, let me first welcome the Youth Communicators from Japan and commend the leading role that Japan has assumed in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education. Let me also extend a warm welcome to the Permanent Representative of France. We look forward to working with her.

I just wanted to take the floor to underline again that the priority for Turkey is to assume the work of the Conference on Disarmament, that is, to negotiate legally binding treaties, and adoption of a programme in that respect is still a priority for us. This does not, clearly, undermine the importance of other issues, however. Bringing the Conference back to its negotiating mandate is the most important of all. Our views on expansion of the Conference are well known. I will not dwell on them right now, but let me again stress that we are more than willing to look at the issue of expansion as soon as a programme of work is adopted and negotiations are under way.

The President: I have no further speakers on my list, which means that we will close the formal meeting here and then move to an informal meeting. I hereby close the meeting. We will allow five minutes for our colleagues on the technical side to arrange everything for the informal meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.